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One month afterwards the loan exhibition of the Metropolitan Museum marked a distinct epoch in the history of American Art. For the first time, on such an occasion, the hanging-committee jumped into a national reputation, by giving American artists a fair chance in a competition with European artists. The material was abundant, the use of it was felicitous, the recognition of it by the public was immediate and hearty. The comparison between native and foreign Art was made under just and easy conditions, and the verdict was honourable to the former. Connoisseurs who for years had sneered at American pictures in the spirit of the *Saturday Review*, were led openly to confess that they had made a mistake, and that by the side of European paintings our home productions held their own with positive distinction. It seems, therefore, that American Art has entered upon a new and very hopeful epoch, and that the artists who are now filling their portfolios with fresh reminiscences and transcripts of American scenery never before had so many or valid reasons for encouragement. The demand for works of Art is to-day larger in every civilised country than at any previous period, and the supply is larger as well. At the latest Paris *Salon*, the latest London Royal Academy exhibition, and the latest New York Academy exhibition, more

pictures were refused admission, and more complaints were heard in consequence, than on any former similar occasion. In every metropolis that holds an annual display of native Art-works the cry is for increased accommodations for the display of the same; and in New York City, a few weeks ago, considerable interest was manifested in the proposal that the National Academicians should utilise the reservoir walls at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, by making them the foundations of an immense and beautiful edifice, in which should be housed permanently a comprehensive and extended array of American pictures. Whether or not the scheme ever is successful is perhaps a matter less interesting than its significance as a sign of the times. That such a scheme should have been entertained, and by many intelligent persons deemed practicable and imperative, is a fact that will not soon be forgotten either by the artists or their friends. Art has not yet in this country become, as in France, a great popular concern, a condition of the national life, a prime cause of the national prosperity; but its possible function as such is to-day more widely and intelligently recognised than ever before, and there are not lacking sagacious citizens who give their material treasures to the cause of Art as a promoter of the commercial prosperity of their country.

ON THE LEGEND OF ST. MACARIUS.

OUR illustration is taken from a photograph of an illumination in an inedited Codex (11, 1, 122) of the Maghabechiana Library in Florence. The photograph has lately been published in the first number of Professor Bartoli's illustrated catalogue of Italian MSS. in Florence; but, as it will be described in the next number by Signor Alvisi, we profit by the notes kindly placed by him at our disposal. Palæographic experts assign the date of the Codex to the first half of the fourteenth century, so that this representation of the legend of St. Macarius is specially interesting, as being anterior to Orcagna's famous fresco in the Campo Santo at Pisa, in which that master has

represented the same subject, and in the treatment of which there are points of resemblance to that of the illumination. The allegory of "I tre morti ed i tre vivi" is widely diffused in Italian Art; but, strangely enough, there is no mention of its principal character, St. Macarius, in the best-known records of later date. But in those of very early date—as, for instance, in the Latin poem cited by Douce, and in many devotional books, as well as in the "Dance of Death" in the Cimetière des Innocents in Paris—he appears to have dropped out of the allegory as it gradually lost the monastic character which had originated it. Neither the recently discovered Latin poem from a Ferrarese



Codex in St. Vigo's monograph, "Le Danze Macabre in Italia" (Leghorn 1878), nor the Italian legend from a Vatican MS., quoted by Professor Monaci in No. 3 of the *Giornale di Filologia Romana* (Rome, 1878), contains any mention of St. Macarius. His figure is found in a fresco at the Benedictine monastery of Subiaco, but it represents a different development of the legend. The Codex from which our illustration is taken is a book of Lauds, which originally belonged to the Compagnia dello Spirito Santo, which formerly held its meetings in the church of the Augustins at Florence. There can be no question, it is to be presumed, of the date of the Codex, but it is evident that the architecture of the church in the back-

ground, and the mode of representing trees, are older than the date assigned to the MS. Illuminations frequently appear older than they are in reality, owing to the fact that conventual Art was sometimes more stationary in style than other Art. Considering its date, the action and expression of the figures are very striking, but are in harmony with the rapid progress made in Italian Art after the commencement of the great mediæval revival in the thirteenth century, a period of great vigour, during which the Italians shot ahead of all other nations. The false perspective of the coffins is curious, and, to the best of our recollection, is repeated in those in the Orcagna fresco.

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